


City of Cincinnati



Interdepartment
Correspondence
Sheet

August 2, 2006

To: Mayor and Members of City Council
From: David E. Rager, City Manager 
Subject: LEED Certification for Public Buildings

Document #200600451

The City Council at its session on May 1, 2006 referred the following item for review and report:

MOTION, dated 05/02/06, submitted by Councilmembers Cole and Bortz, that any new municipal buildings in Cincinnati be constructed to LEED certification.

The Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) program was developed by the United States Green Building Council in 2000. The intent of this program is to guide design professionals toward creating energy efficient and environmentally friendly buildings. The program uses a check list to determine if this effort is sufficient enough to meet pre-established criteria for certification. The check list considers qualities such as site sustainability, water efficiency, energy efficiency, atmospheric quality, use of safe and effective materials and other resources, indoor environmental quality and the use of innovation throughout the design process.

Reaching full certification along all categories can be difficult. The United States Green Building Council reports on their web site that since the program was created in 2000, 2,069 projects have registered but only 289 have become certified. The LEED program has, however, been extremely successful at raising energy awareness within buildings and striving in building design to reduce future operating costs while also helping preserve natural resources and protecting the environment.

The City of Cincinnati is preparing to begin construction on a brand new facility that was designed with the intent of meeting as many of the LEED requirements as was practical. This facility is a new fire house located in North Avondale which will become the new home for Fire Station 9. The design process for this facility began with a consultant's evaluation of LEED criteria and a determination that this facility was an ideal candidate for the program.

The design of new construction or major renovation of buildings must consider a multitude of factors and the benefits they create. The end result of this process is the creation of a benefit cost analysis across these factors. The analysis also carefully considers future operating cost savings and future operating cost avoidances. This analysis is essential to the successful application of the LEED program.

LEED is a powerful program that has raised awareness of green buildings and sustainability in design. Ultimately, LEED requirements can be an effective tool for designers to determine which aspects of the program provide the best return on the investment. Incorporating many of the LEED design strategies that have little if any additional cost is possible as a part of any capital improvement program. Those that increase costs must be given a thorough benefit cost analysis before they are utilized.

The City is committed to making every cost effective attempt to obtaining LEED certification for Fire Station 9. The City will also follow this process for other building improvements and create benefit cost analyses. The use of operating cost savings and where they are applied by the budget process should continue to be part of the City's overall budget strategy. However, these savings will be used to justify added capital expenditures as a part of the LEED-driven benefit cost analysis.

Cc: Steven Bailey, Public Services 
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